



# The ISC Newsletter

International Society of Cryptozoology

Summer 1984  
Vol. 3, No. 2

Editor  
J. Richard Greenwell

The ISC Newsletter is an official publication of the International Society of Cryptozoology, and is published for Society members and Institutional subscribers. Membership is \$25 annually; Institutional subscriptions are \$35. Membership and subscription inquiries and correspondence should be addressed to ISC, Box 43070, Tucson, AZ 85733, USA; (602) 884-8369.

News media services may quote up to 250 words from this publication, provided that the source is given.

© 1984, International  
Society of Cryptozoology

## OFFICERS

Bernard Heuvelmans, *President*  
Center for Cryptozoology  
Le Bugue, France

Roy P. Mackal, *Vice President*  
Department of Biology  
The University of Chicago  
Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

J. Richard Greenwell, *Secretary*  
International Society of Cryptozoology  
P.O. Box 43070  
Tucson, Arizona 85733, U.S.A.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dmitri Bayanov  
Darwin Museum  
Moscow, U.S.S.R.

Eric Buffetaut  
Laboratory of Vertebrate and  
Human Paleontology  
University of Paris VI  
Paris, France

Joseph F. Gennaro  
Department of Biology  
New York University  
New York, New York, U.S.A.

Philippe Janvier  
Institute of Paleontology  
National Museum of Natural History  
Paris, France

Grover S. Krantz  
Department of Anthropology  
Washington State University  
Pullman Washington, U.S.A.

Paul H. LeBlond  
Department of Oceanography  
The University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Nikolai Spassov  
Department of Mammals  
National Museum of Natural History  
Bulgarian Academy of Science  
Sofia, Bulgaria

Phillip V. Tobias  
Department of Anatomy  
University of Witwatersrand  
Johannesburg, South Africa

Leigh Van Valen  
Department of Biology  
The University of Chicago  
Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

Forrest G. Wood  
Biosciences Department  
Naval Ocean Systems Center  
U.S. Department of the Navy  
San Diego, California, U.S.A.

Zhou Guoxing  
Beijing Natural History Museum  
Beijing, China

George R. Zug  
Division of Amphibians and Reptiles  
National Museum of Natural History  
Smithsonian Institution  
Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

ISSN 0741-5362

## PROPOSED SASQUATCH HUNT STIRS NEW CONTROVERSIES



Sasquatch as seen in the "classic" frame from the Patterson-Gimlin film (© Rene Dahiden). An ex-army ranger now plans to end the controversy by shooting with a rifle instead of a camera.

It all began in late March. After little activity in the Bigfoot scene for some time, the media--in this case the Associated Press--highlighted a story that created a new furor: a Vietnam combat veteran announced plans to hunt down the supposed Sasquatch of the Pacific Northwest, and to shoot it.

Mark E. Keller, 33, who worked at the time for the U.S. Postal Service branch in Eureka, California, decided to quit his job, and, with two companions, spend about five months in remote wilderness areas of the Cascade Mountain Range. Keller believes that he has a good chance at succeeding where many others have failed, because of his experience on three combat

tours in Vietnam as a U.S. Army Ranger, and his night-vision equipment. "Pictures have been taken before, but nobody cares about pictures," said Keller. "If you get that one opportunity to obtain a Sasquatch, you had better make it stick. Tranquilizers and drugs are not feasible. That leaves us with either trying to invite it nicely with roses or a card, which will not work either, or treating it as an animal and putting it down with a rifle."

Following his 1972 discharge from the Army with the rank of sergeant, Keller took several kinds of jobs, including a year in the Middle East as a mercenary. He also apparently has looked for Sasquatch before, and

## Honorary Members:

Andre Capart - Belgium; Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer - South Africa; David James - United Kingdom; Marie-Jeanne Koffmann - Soviet Union; Ingo Krumbiegel - West Germany; Theodore Monod - France; John R. Napier - United Kingdom; and Sir Peter Scott - United Kingdom.



has found tracks "on more than one occasion." He has reportedly been actively preparing for the expedition for 2 years.

The other two team members, also from California, are Vince Thomas, 21, another Army Ranger, and James Wyatt, 27, who was chosen "for his woodsmanship." Keller will have a .338 Winchester magnum rifle, equipped with a Smith and Wesson MK 700 Startron night-vision telescopic sight. Their expedition was to begin in late May.

Grover S. Krantz, a physical anthropologist at Washington State University, supported the venture, and offered the team his advice. Krantz, who has studied Sasquatch evidence for many years, maintains that the animal does, in fact, exist, and that it is a bipedal hominid, probably of the fossil genus *Gigantopithecus*. He has advocated the killing of one specimen in order to prove conclusively its existence, which would then result in immediate protective and conservation measures having to be taken by state and federal agencies.

Over the years, Krantz' position has resulted in clashes with some other Sasquatch investigators, who believe strongly that not even one individual should be killed, particularly as the species may well be on the verge of extinction. Many individuals on both sides of the issue are now members of the relatively new ISC, and the clashes continue. (It should be pointed out that Krantz, who serves on the Society's Board of Directors, speaks only for himself on such matters, not on behalf of the Society. A new Policy Statement currently being drafted by that Board makes it clear that the Society itself has no policy concerning the authenticity of particular cryptozoological reports or events, or the manner in acquiring specimens to establish a supposed species' existence--Editor.)

Soon after Keller's announcement, it was implied by a State of California wildlife official that, despite the fact that Sasquatch is not officially recognized, the hunt, if successful, would be illegal, at least in California. Hal Mefford, of the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), said state law lists the animals that may be killed by hunters in California. The killing of animals not on the list--known or unknown (including Sasquatch)--would be considered illegal. In such a situation, however, a determination would probably have to be made by the State Attorney General. (The law in question is Title 14, Section 472, of the California Administrative Code, violations of which can result in a misdemeanor, punishable by 6 months in jail and a \$1,000 fine.)

Sandra Wolf, head of the DFG Conservation Education Branch in Sacramento, stated that the Fish and Game Commission would have to issue a permit to Keller to pursue or willfully kill a Sasquatch in California. "If it was determined to be an animal, he'd have to get permission to hunt it," she said, adding that, in Catch-22 fashion, permission cannot be given because nobody really knows if it is an animal or a human.

The DFG Region 1 Office in Reading, near Arcata, began receiving many irate phone calls from the public concerning Keller's plans. Patrol Inspector David Nelson stated: "The DFG's official position is that what this guy intends to do is illegal." He also expressed concern over the possible use of the night scope, which he stated was illegal to use in California except for law enforcement or scientific research purposes. The announced intention to "live off the land" was an additional concern, as "there could be some other [Fish and Game Code] violations going on." Despite the ruckus, there was no evidence

that Keller would be conducting his hunt in California.

As for federal involvement, Sasquatch, if proven to exist, would be immediately added to the Endangered Species List, and conservation measures would have to be instituted immediately by the Office of Endangered Species (OES) of the Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. OES officials generally keep an eye on Sasquatch happenings--just in case--and read the ISC publications. (One OES official told the Editor last year, in an unofficial capacity, that he hoped that nobody would ever actually shoot a Sasquatch to prove its existence.)

Keller, meanwhile, was being barraged by letters and phone calls, both for him and against him. Gina Bentzley, writing in the *Eureka Times-Standard* on April 1, related how Keller had received threatening phone calls--some even threatening his life. "I'm trying to deal with this realistically, and they want to deal with it emotionally," he said. The main instigator, according to the *Times-Standard*, was Seattle's Erik (alias Jon) Beckjord, director of the "National Cryptozoological Society" (which has no connection with ISC). Beckjord (see "Ness Teams Crowd Loch," *Newsletter*, Winter, 1983) told the press that Keller's group posed a threat to human safety in the woods, and might "shoot at anything that moves." Keller's response: "They're trying to detract from the real issue and raise a scare... I don't know why people are opposed to hunting Sasquatch... There's not one natural history museum--even the Smithsonian--that doesn't take specimens... I'm leading a legitimate expedition to bring Bigfoot out of folklore and put it into fact." He also stated that he had contacted police officials concerning the threats he had received, but "only about the ones that seemed

serious." A police spokesman said they were investigating the threats.

The following day, April 2, the plot thickened. The Commissioners of Skamania County, in Washington State, alarmed by Keller's plans, voted 3-0 to reconsider a 1969 ordinance that made it a felony to kill a Sasquatch, punishable by up to 5 years in the county jail and a \$10,000 fine. The vote to reconsider the ordinance was urged by Roy Craft, the retired director of the *Skamania County Pioneer*, who stated: "If indeed they do exist, and I'm 99 percent sure they do, I don't think they ought to be murdered just to have a specimen." A public hearing was scheduled for April 16, with final action by the commissioners to be taken 2 weeks later. Skamania County has been a "hot" area of Sasquatch reports for decades. It is also the county where the Mount St. Helens volcano, and its legendary Ape Canyon, are located.

The reason for the Commissioners' action was because of the uncertain legality of the 1969 ordinance. County Prosecutor Robert K. Leick pointed out that it "made it a felony to kill a Bigfoot, which really exceeded the jurisdiction of the county commissioners. We [are revising] that to make it a gross misdemeanor or a misdemeanor, depending on whether or not it is done with malice." The new ordinance, although watered down, would be more enforceable, and would establish Skamania County as a Sasquatch "sanctuary." It would also provide for a slain Sasquatch to be examined by the county coroner. If, after consultation with forensic experts and anthropologists, the coroner determined that the Sasquatch was a member of the genus *Homo*, the killer would be charged with homicide. County Prosecutor Leick also serves as the county coroner in Skamania County.

The revised ordinance called for the willful slaying of a Sasquatch "with malice" a gross misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in the county jail, a \$5,000 fine, or both. A killing "without malice" would be punishable by up to 6 months in the county jail, a \$500 fine, or both. Another provision of the revised ordinance was that an insanity plea ("insane delusions [or] diminished capacity") would not be accepted as a defense by a person charged with homicide in connection with a Sasquatch death. This would preclude the necessity of the county having to retain--and pay for--six psychiatrists, for both the prosecution and the defense.

As the date of the hearing approached, public interest increased, despite the fact that there was no indication whatsoever that Keller's group would be operating in Washington State, much less Skamania County. Beckjord announced to the press the formation of a Committee Against Shooting Sasquatches, and his plans to follow Keller's team in the forest, attempting to disrupt their stealth by blasting the woods with loud rock music. Roy Craft continued to call for the revised ordinance: "These people are planning to come up here with a bunch of sophisticated weaponry and do a lot of hunting at night. Quite aside from the creature itself," he said, "this poses a real danger to a lot of people... Equally scary is this bunch that wants to bring in rock music and beat on tin cans. God knows what we can do about the rock music!"

It was not made clear by Beckjord, who announced that he would "testify" at the April 16 hearing, how he would know of (or locate) the whereabouts of Keller's group in the vast Cascade range, which stretches from California to Canada. It was also not clear why Beckjord was expressing public concern about the possible shooting of a Sas-

quatch, as in the past he has always maintained that it would be impossible to catch one or even shoot one because of what he believes to be their metaphysical or paranormal nature.

Beckjord, meanwhile, was also having other problems. According to the *Seattle Times* of March 16, by a ruling of the King County Superior Court, he was in default in the case of *Lincoln vs. Beckjord*. Apparently, Beckjord was supposed to produce a documentary film, entitled "The Bigfoot Solution," in which Anya K. Lincoln had invested \$65,000 in 1982 and 1983. In her lawsuit, Lincoln claimed that the proposed movie is now a "fraudulent and hopeless venture," and that Beckjord had made "intentional false representations."

The judgment was issued in default, according to David Borkland of *The Seattle Times*, because Beckjord did not respond to the lawsuit. Observers in the Bigfoot field doubt that the \$65,000, or what is left of it, will ever be returned. Lincoln refused to talk to the press about it. As for Beckjord, he informed the *Times* that "hell hath no fury like a woman scorned." He also delivered a press release to the *Times* on March 15, in which he claimed that the reason he did not appear in court to defend himself was because he had no money for an attorney, and he "did not want to dignify the case by fighting it."

The Skamania County Commissioners, in the meantime, met as scheduled, and numerous persons involved in Sasquatchery were present, including Beckjord. All the discussions were in favor of the proposed new ordinance, so it was adopted by Commissioners Bill Benson, Eric Wedin, and Ed Callahan, the Chairman.

Soon afterward, two other counties were considering taking similar action. Commissioners



from Walla Walla County, Washington, and Umatilla County, Oregon, signed a joint resolution calling for protection of Sasquatch. The resolution was presented by Vance Orchard, a retired Walla Walla reporter who has followed the subject for years. The resolution calls for consultation with Skamania County commissioners to prepare similar ordinances. Orchard hopes that the three counties will eventually be officially designated as Sasquatch sanctu-

aries. Umatilla and Walla Walla counties are the location of the northern extension of Oregon's Blue Mountains, where U.S. Forest Service patrolman Paul Freeman reportedly saw a Sasquatch in 1982, and where several footprint casts were made which show dermatoglyphic ("fingerprint") patterns (see *Newsletters*, Summer, 1982, Autumn, 1982, and the article by Grover S. Krantz in *Cryptozoology*, Vol. 2 [1983]). Freeman, no longer with the Forest Service, is reportedly still

hunting for Sasquatch (also with firearms) in the area.

Whether Sasquatch actually exists is still uncertain; whether Keller's team will be able to shoot one is unlikely, and whether county commissioners can protect it is even more unlikely. Sasquatch itself, meanwhile, has remained aloof from all the proceedings, with practically no eyewitness reports since 1982. □

## NEW ISC BOARD DECISIONS

The Board of Directors of the Society met on June 8, 1984, at the University of Paris VI, Paris, France, and several important decisions were made. Present at the meeting, hosted by the University's Laboratory of Vertebrate and Human Paleontology, were Eric Buffetaut, who chaired the session, and Philippe Janvier, both affiliated with the Laboratory, Grover Krantz, Paul LeBlond, and Officers Bernard Heuvelmans (President), Roy Mackal (Vice-President), and Richard Greenwell (Secretary). Also present for parts of the meeting (as non-voting guests) were Pascal Tassy, also of the hosting laboratory, and David Heppell, of the Royal Scottish Museum, both of whom serve on the Editorial Board of the journal.

The Board made the following decisions:

1) To leave unchanged the \$25 membership fee (and \$35 institutional subscription fee) for 1985, despite rising publications costs.

2) To initiate a "member-get-a-member" program, similar to what some other scientific societies are doing. The program, designed to increase the Society's membership to 1,000 by year's end, has the following rules: each member who brings in a new member (including through

gift membership) or library subscriber during the 1984 ISC fiscal year (which ends February 28, 1985) will receive a \$10 discount in his or her 1985 membership dues of \$25. When renewing for 1985, the member need only enclose \$15, and indicate the name of the new individual or library he or she was responsible for bringing in (this can be easily verified by checking the Society's computerized membership/subscription list). A maximum of two \$10 credits will be allowed in a given year, meaning the renewing member will still have to pay at least \$5. The program takes effect immediately. Members of the Board of Directors and the Editorial Board of the journal are not illegible to participate. Members are particularly urged to obtain library subscriptions at universities and research institutions (public libraries are less likely to subscribe) because they generate more income than do individual memberships. Members are reminded that both membership and institutional subscription enrollment cards may be found in the back inside cover of Volume 2 (1983) of the journal. (New memberships and institutional subscriptions can be initiated without these cards, however.)

3) To establish two new categories of Society affiliation: Benefactor and Corporate Spon-

sor. Benefactor status will be granted to individuals who have contributed \$1,000 or more, and they will so be recognized in the Society's publications. Benefactor also carries with it a lifetime membership, with no additional dues ever required. The Corporate Sponsor category will be open to business firms wishing to contribute toward the Society's operations. A minimum of \$1,000 a year is necessary for as many years as the company wishes to be identified as a Society Corporate Sponsor. They will also be recognized in the publications.

4) To terminate the previously established mechanism allowing the Society to sponsor field expeditions. Following the establishment of the mechanism about a year and a half ago, the Board became increasingly concerned over the ramifications involved. Questions were raised concerning the appropriateness of the financial aspects (which would necessarily involve donated, tax-deductible monies from persons wishing to participate in expeditions), the review and approvals methods, the implication that the Society endorses certain kinds of cryptozoological reports over others by officially "sponsoring" an expedition, and, finally, the possible appearance of attempting to compete with already established groups (such as those operating at Loch Ness). In view of all the problems involved, and following a one-year study by a

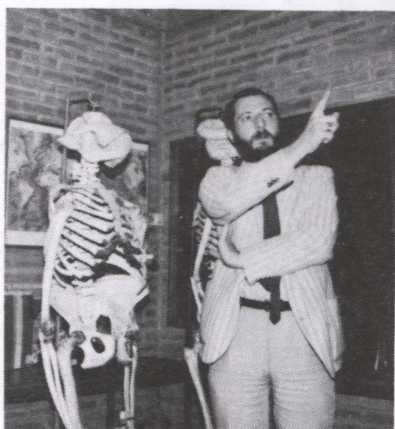
three-person committee, the Board decided to get the Society out of the expeditions business. All members are free to run their own expeditions, but they will have no official sanction or sponsorship by the Society, although the Society will continue to serve as a forum for publication and discussion of expedition results.

5) The Board also redrafted a "Policy Statement" which has been in preparation for some time clarifying the Society's position on various aspects of cryptozoology, including the acquisition of specimens. The new draft has to be circulated to the entire Board again, and once approved, will be published in the *Newsletter*.

6) The Board also decided to accept the invitation of Forrest G. Wood to host next year's Board and Membership meetings in San Diego, California. The meeting will be scheduled for late May, 1985. Further details will be published when available.

□

## MEMBERSHIP MEETING IN PARIS



Eric Buffetaut (right), who moderated the ISC Membership Meeting at the University of Paris VI, taking a question from the floor.

The Second Membership Meeting of the Society was held on June 9 at the University of Paris VI, Paris, France, and was attended by almost 100 members from France, Holland, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Portugal, West Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. The meeting was hosted by the Laboratory of Vertebrate and Human Paleontology, and was organized by Eric Buffetaut, of that Laboratory, who serves on the ISC Board of Directors. (The Membership Meeting followed the Board of Directors meeting held at the same location the previous day.)

Society President Bernard Heuvelmans gave the first presentation by briefly reviewing the nature and history of cryptozoology, which resulted in a lively public exchange with folklorist Michel Meurger, co-

author of *Les Monstres des Lacs du Quebec* (see "Canadian 'Monster Lakes' in the News," *Newsletter*, Summer, 1982), who stressed the mythical elements of many cryptozoological reports.

This was followed by a presentation by Marie-Jeanne Koffmann of the Soviet Union, who discussed the reports she has gathered for over 20 years of the alleged "wildman" of the Caucasus Mountains, known as the Almasti, providing background, information on witnesses, mostly old people and shepherds. (Although Dr. Koffmann would not commit herself, other Soviet investigators believe the Almasti of the Caucasus represents living Neanderthaloids.) Her slides showed the rough, high-altitude terrain of the northern Caucasus, where the remaining Almasti are said to survive, as well as alleged Almasti footprints, one of which indicated a large "mobile" toe capable of some lateral movement. The "mobile" toe on the otherwise hominid-looking footprint resulted in considerable discussion among those present. Dr. Koffmann, who continues to live and do fieldwork in the Caucasus, is an Honorary Member of the Society. Her biography appeared in the Autumn, 1982, *Newsletter*.

Grover Krantz, an American physical anthropologist and Society Board member, presented his findings on the Walla Walla Sasquatch footprint casts, which show friction skin (dermato-

glyphic) patterns. Dr. Krantz made the case for their significance as a decisive element in establishing the authenticity of Sasquatch as an unknown hominid. The presentation was similar to the one he gave at the 1983 Membership Meeting at New York University. Full details may be found in his article in Volume 2 (1983) of the journal.

Congolese biologist Marcellin Agnagna spoke of his government's 1983 expedition to the Likouala swamps, which he led, and of his sighting of an unidentified animal in Lake Telle, which he presumes to be Mokele-Mbembe. The animal was first observed at a distance of about 300 meters, and an approach was made to within about 240 meters by wading in the water. Further details may be found in the Winter, 1983, *Newsletter*, and in Agnagna's own Field Report in Volume 2 (1983) of the journal. (Note: Because of translation and communications problems, an error appears in both of the above-mentioned publications. During their respective visits to Paris in early June, the Editor and Agnagna were able to discuss the alleged sighting, and the events surrounding it, in some detail, and to clarify the uncertain points. See the "Special Interview" with Agnagna elsewhere in this issue, which includes the clarifications.)

Jacqueline Roumeguere-Eberhardt, a cultural anthropologist with the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS),



presented her findings, based on several years of fieldwork, concerning possible unknown hominids in East Africa, particularly Kenya. She has collected 100 sighting reports from native informants, mainly Masai, two-thirds of which were first-hand reports. Unlike most "wildman" investigators in other parts of the world, Roumeguere-Eberhardt has not attempted to "identify" what hominids might be involved, but has limited herself to breaking the reports down into five distinct categories, which she labels X1, X2, X3, X4, and X5 (plus X6, for uncertain reports). These categories are based on size, coloration, be-

havior, etc., but she conceded that the categories could be broken down further to represent maybe one or two unknown hominid types.

Following the presentations, lengthy audience discussions took place in several languages, concerning the merits of particular claims or types of evidence. The meeting was a success mainly due to the disagreements aired and the critical exchanges which occurred, all of which sharpened the thinking of those present, and more clearly delineated the possible future pitfalls in the practice of cryptozoology. □



Marie-Jeanne Koffmann (left), a Soviet researcher who studies reports of the wildman of the Caucasus, and Jacqueline Roumeguere-Eberhardt, a French anthropologist who collects similar reports in Kenya, discussing mutual interests at the Paris ISC Meeting.

## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

First, our thanks go to French ISC members for sponsoring a very successful Membership Meeting in Paris on June 9. Members from at least eight countries attended, and although the meeting was not large, usually fewer than 100 persons, it emphasized the international nature of the Society. For once, the handful of Americans present were in the minority. Our special thanks to Board Member Eric Buffetaut, of the Uni-

versity of Paris VI, for making the meeting a success.

On a personal note, Paul Le-Blond, Roy Mackal, and myself accompanied Bernard Heuvelmans back to Le Bugue after the Paris meeting to visit his famous Center for Cryptozoology, located on the rural Verliac Estate of Scott and Alike Lindbergh (Scott, famous for breeding and reintroducing primates back into the wild, is the son of aviator Charles Lindbergh). Dr. Heuvelmans' center, which contains more than 18,000 references related to cryptozoology, was an appropriate setting for the lengthy talks held well into the night, and every subject addressed, no matter how obscure, had its corresponding file.

But perhaps the most rewarding experience of the visit for me was seeing Heuvelmans and Mackal, the President and Vice-President of the Society, conversing and getting to know each other better after decades of respective bibliographic and field research. They only met for the first time in early 1982, when the Society was formed. The accompanying photo shows the two of them savoring



Roy Mackal (left) and Bernard Heuvelmans on a country stroll through the rural Verliac Estate in southern France, where Heuvelmans operates his Center for Cryptozoology.

## PAST ISC PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Past issues of both *The ISC Newsletter* and the journal *Cryptozoology* are available to both members and non-members. Newsletter prices to individuals are \$2.50 each (\$3.50 to institutions, corporations, and libraries). Journal prices to individuals are \$15 each (\$21 to institutions, corporations, and libraries). Prices include postage good for all orders from all countries.

All past ISC publications are still available, as follows:

### Newsletter:

Vol. 1, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 (1982)  
Vol. 2, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 (1983)  
Vol. 3, No. 1 (1984)

### Journal:

Vol. 1 (1982)  
Vol. 2 (1983)

their visit (Mackal temporarily sans beard, for reasons he would not reveal).

-- J. Richard Greenwell  
Editor



## SPECIAL INTERVIEW

In April and May of 1983, the Ministry of Water and Forests of the Congolese government sent an expedition to the Likouala swamps, about 500 miles north of Brazzaville, to seek further evidence of the Mokele-Mbembe. The expedition, headed by Congolese biologist Marcellin Agnagna, reached Lake Telle, and Agnagna and two Boha villagers reportedly saw the animal on May 1. Details are contained in the Winter, 1983, Newsletter, and in Agnagna's own Field Report in Vol. 2 of *Cryptozoology* (1983). Translation ambiguities, and Agnagna's unavailability at the time of publication (having moved temporarily from the Congo to France) resulted in an error appearing in both of the above publications. Contrary to what was published, no lens cap was left on the movie camera. Rather, the camera was accidentally set on "macro," resulting in Agnagna's temporary inability to film the animal. He ran out of film almost immediately, and was 2 kilometers from camp, where more film was kept.

With Agnagna in Montpellier, France, for a year, and the ISC Membership Meeting taking place in Paris, the Editor took advantage of the opportunity to meet Agnagna and clarify points of uncertainty in his published report. The following interview should provide the reader with the clarification, plus additional details. Eric Buffetaut, of the Laboratory of Vertebrate and Human Paleontology of the University of Paris VI, was an observer during the interview, which took place on June 7, 1984.

**Greenwell:** I'd like to follow the sequence of events that led up to your sighting of the animal in Lake Telle. As I recall, you were filming the swamp forest about 2 kilometers from camp when it happened.

**Agnagna:** Yes, I was filming some monkeys, when suddenly a forest antelope ran by. We started running after it with the dogs, but one of the Boha villagers who was with me fell in the mud, and he went to the lake to wash himself off. After a few minutes, he started calling me, shouting, "Marcellin, Marcellin, come with the camera, quickly!"

**Greenwell:** What were you doing during those several minutes. Weren't you still chasing the antelope?

**Agnagna:** No, the antelope had escaped, and we had stopped chasing it. We started looking for monkeys again, while he was washing off.

**Greenwell:** How far away was he from you?

**Agnagna:** About 40 or 50 meters. When he first started calling, I ignored him, but he kept calling us, so we went over to where he was.

**Greenwell:** So you still had film in the camera?

**Agnagna:** Yes, a little. When we arrived at the lake, he shouted, "Look at that, look at that!" At first, I didn't see anything, with all the obstructions and commotion. I kept asking, "What?" And he kept shouting, "Look at that!" So I went into the water, and then I saw the animal out on the lake.

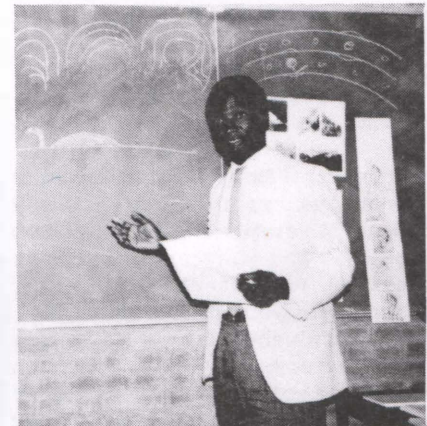
**Greenwell:** In your report you stated that the foliage, the vegetation, obstructed your view. Now, isn't it true that, at the lake, the vegetation comes right up to the edge of the water?

**Agnagna:** Yes. There are big trees and leaves. Dinkoumbou was in the water, but we

weren't. Because we were on the bank, we couldn't see the animal clearly.

**Greenwell:** So you went out to where he was, stepping into the water?

**Agnagna:** Yes. We got into the water with him and saw the animal. We saw the back of the animal, and the neck. It was looking at us. I thought that it had heard us. I tried to film the animal, but the film was almost finished because I had been filming monkeys. Also, there are different settings on the camera, and I had it set on "macro" by mistake. So, when I looked through the viewfinder, I couldn't see anything. But I started filming anyway. By the time I realized my mistake and corrected it, the film was finished. I kept running the camera anyway, and was able to see the face of the animal.



Congolese biologist Marcellin Agnagna discussing his alleged observation to an audience at the University of Paris VI.

**Greenwell:** You mean you had a telephoto lens, which you then used to watch it?

**Agnagna:** Yes, I could see a lot of detail.

**Greenwell:** You said that when you first saw the animal it was looking around. Was it just the head turning, or was it the whole neck and head?

Agnagna: It was both the head and the neck. Not turning right around, just looking from side to side. It was a very emotional experience. Then, as there was no movie film left, I began using my 35mm camera, a Russian one, but the image was very small. I took several photographs showing the head and the neck of the animal. They have been at a laboratory here in Paris, but I don't think they have done anything with them.

Greenwell: Is anything visible in these photographs?

Agnagna: There is something visible, but you can't see any details. It may be possible to enlarge them without losing clarity through some special process. [Note: Agnagna has offered to make the photographs available to ISC--Editor.]

Greenwell: We ha' heard that you had accidentally left the lens cap on the camera. Is that true?

Agnagna: No, that's incorrect. I had it set on macro by mistake.

Greenwell: Now, I want to make sure we've got the right sequence of events. You saw the animal. It was an emotional moment. You started filming. You thought you still had film, but you weren't sure. You couldn't see anything through the viewfinder. You realized you had it set on "macro" by mistake. Then you realized that you were out of film. Is that right? And then you started looking at the animal telescopically, through the viewfinder.

Agnagna: Yes.

Greenwell: How far away was the animal?

Agnagna: About 300 meters. Then we waded into the water. We walked about 60 meters.

Greenwell: So you were about 240 meters from the animal.

That's still a long way away. Now tell us what the animal looked like when you saw it through the telephoto lens.

Agnagna: I could see the back part of the neck clearly. It was really black, and it was shining in the sun. The front part of the neck was brown, like my hand.

Greenwell: Did you see its eyes?

Agnagna: Yes, I saw the eyes.

Greenwell: Were they oval or round?

Agnagna: They looked like crocodile eyes. They were oval.

Greenwell: And the face, or the mouth?

Agnagna: Well, I made a drawing, which was published in *Cryptozoology*. What is there is what I saw.

Greenwell: Did you feel it was more like a mammal or a reptile?

Agnagna: It was more like a reptile, not a mammal. It didn't look like a mammal. I'm sure it was a reptile.

Greenwell: Why is that? Did it have scales?

Agnagna: No, but in our forests, in the Congolese forest fauna, we don't have large mammals with long necks.

Greenwell: But you might have one. Mokele-Mbembe might be a large mammal. But you felt that it was a reptile?

Agnagna: Yes.

Greenwell: Did it move slowly or fast?

Agnagna: No, it was moving slowly, it submerged in the water slowly. The head was small.

Greenwell: Did the head look

reptilian?

Agnagna: Yes. It was a very small head.

Greenwell: How long was the neck?

Agnagna: We were far away, but we could see the neck and head clearly. It looked like it was raised about one meter out of the water.

Greenwell: That's not very much. At 300 meters, if it's only one meter high, you're not going to see very much. Are you sure it was only a meter out of the water?

Agnagna: Well, it was really far away, but that was my perception.

Greenwell: Now, the overall length, from that drawing you did, was about five meters. Is that correct?

Agnagna: Yes, and the back was like three meters.

Greenwell: So it was large. Your drawing could be interpreted as being a bird, but there are no five-meter birds.

Agnagna: The back was really big. The sun was shining on it, and it was really black and shiny.

Greenwell: Did you feel it was a sauropod, or do you just want to say it looked like a reptile.

Agnagna: I'll just say it was like a reptile, because I didn't see the whole animal. I can't give a full description of the animal at that distance.

Greenwell: So you waded into the water for about 60 meters. Were you a little afraid, maybe?

Agnagna: I was not afraid. I was really in an emotional state. We started walking in the water, and the animal began going down. When we got out of the water, the neck and head



came back up again, and we watched it for about another 20 minutes.

Greenwell: So the animal submerged completely, and then the neck came up again. The neck with no back. And it was visible for about 20 minutes. Why did you stop wading at 60 meters? You just decided not to go on?

Agnagna: We stopped because the animal had submerged. When it came up again we were not in the water. We had already walked back to the edge of the lake.

Greenwell: So you had left the lake, then you saw the neck come up again? You didn't go back?

Agnagna: No, we didn't.

Greenwell: I understand that it was your impression that the animal submerged because you were approaching it, and there was noise.

Agnagna: I think that the animal felt some disturbances. As we approached, it was looking around, and then it started slowly submerging.

Greenwell: You didn't see any ears on the head of the animal?

Agnagna: No, we didn't. The only thing I can describe is the eyes. I really saw the eyes, and the color of the face, which was brown. The rest was black and shiny, reflecting sunlight.

Greenwell: And the mouth? Could you see a slit, or a line?

Agnagna: No, I couldn't see any details of the mouth.

Greenwell: You didn't see a tail? And of course you never saw the bottom part, any legs or flippers?

Agnagna: No. We just saw the back, the neck, and the head.

Greenwell: Now, you know the animals of the Congo well. You

were born in the Likouala, you grew up there, and now you're a biologist. Could this have been any known animal?

Agnagna: Yes, it is a known animal in the Likouala.

Greenwell: Yes, but I mean known to science. You are absolutely certain that it was not an animal known to zoology, like a crocodile?

Agnagna: No, it couldn't have been a crocodile. It was not a manatee. I think that there are manatees in the Likouala River, because I got some good descriptions of them from fishermen.

Greenwell: Could it have been a snake, a very large python?

Agnagna: No. We saw a very large back on the animal. We don't have any snakes with large backs.

Greenwell: Could it have been coiled, so the coils sticking out of the water might have looked like a back?

Agnagna: No. It couldn't do that. Also, a python in the water wouldn't be able to raise its neck and head one meter out of the water. It would just swim laterally on the surface of the water.

Greenwell: You mentioned there were very large turtles in the lake, I think you said two meters in length.

Agnagna: Yes, that was my estimate.

Greenwell: That's enormous, that's larger than any recorded living freshwater turtle [see "Wood's Animal Facts," this issue--Editor]. You caught one and you ate it, didn't you?

Agnagna: Yes, we caught a small one. We took it back to Brazzaville. It was around 30 centimeters. We saw a big one about five times when we were at our camp watching the lake. The

first time we saw a big turtle was when we first got to the lake. We were putting up our tents, and we saw something in the water. At first we thought it was Mokele-Mbembe but the Boha villagers with us pointed out that it was just a turtle.

Greenwell: How far away was it?

Agnagna: The first time we saw it, it was far, like about 60 meters.

Greenwell: So you had already seen turtles there, big ones. And then you saw this other animal. Are you absolutely certain that the animal you saw was not a giant turtle?

Agnagna: Yes, it was really different. We saw the turtles clearly, including the neck and head. But this animal was not a turtle.

Greenwell: All right. I'm just trying to be absolutely clear, that's why I'm asking you all these questions. So we've done turtles, we've done snakes, we've done crocodiles, we've done manatees. There are no hippos there, in the Likouala. I know they are in the Ubangi River, but not in the swamps. Also, a hippo doesn't have a thin neck.

Agnagna: That's right. There were also crocodiles in Lake Telle. We killed some crocodiles and took some specimens to the Brazzaville Zoo.

Greenwell: Well, after you saw the animal, you left Lake Telle and you went back to Brazzaville. Why did you leave?

[Agnagna's response relates to a number of factors which had a negative impact on the expedition, including equipment which never arrived from Brazzaville, lack of cooperation and morale problems involving other expedition members, and other difficulties--Editor.]

Greenwell: It must have been a very difficult situation. □



# ISC JOURNAL CRITICISED AGAIN

Following a not-too-complimentary review of *Cryptozoology* in *Nature* by Princeton ecologist Robert May (see Spring, 1984, *Newsletter*), a new review has appeared in *The Ohio Journal of Science* by Ohio State University zoologist Tim M. Berra.

The author briefly reviews the various articles in Volume 1 (Heuvelmans, Zhou, Rines, Wagner, and Bauer), the field report by Mackal, et. al., on Mokele-Mbembe, and the research report by Weber, et. al., which presented the results of the Molombo (*Landolphia*) nutritional analysis. Molombo, according to the northern Congo natives, is the staple food source of Mokele-Mbembe. Instead, Weber et. al. found that Molombo most resembled a pear nutritionally, and it could not serve as the sole food source of a large herbivore. Dr. Berra concluded, however, that "the whole [Weber] endeavor reminded me of reading

creationist literature."

Dr. Berra, who is also editor of the *Ohio Journal of Science*, stated that *Cryptozoology*, "if it is to survive and become more than a propaganda organ for the true believers, must incorporate scientific rigor and a healthy dose of skepticism..." As with the May review in *Nature*, the author addressed only Volume 1 (1982). Volume 2 (1983), which contains many more critical and skeptical manuscripts, was received while the review was in press, and Dr. Berra adds a postscript, briefly reviewing various manuscripts (Heuvelmans, Poirier, et. al., Colarusso, Krantz, Agnagna, and Wagner, et. al.).

The author concludes that Volume 2 "is much more interesting and slightly less advocacy than Volume 1... Despite my skepticism, I must confess that this is the only journal, of the

dozen or so that I receive, that I read from cover to cover. If it becomes more critically rigorous, I may be able to take it seriously." The full reference is: *The Ohio Journal of Science*, Vol. 84(3):142-144 (June, 1984).

Another critical review of Volume 1 of the journal, and a general review of the status of cryptozoology as a science, has been published by evolutionary biologist George Gaylord Simpson. A noted paleontologist at the University of Arizona, Simpson's critique is a landmark in the literature on cryptozoology, and will be reported on more fully in the Autumn *Newsletter*. For those who wish to obtain a copy, the full reference is "Mammals and Cryptozoology," George Gaylord Simpson, 1984, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 128(1):1-19.

□

## CRYPTOLETTERS

The Editor welcomes letters from readers on any topic related to cryptozoology, but reserves the right to shorten them or to make slight changes to improve style and clarity, but not meaning. Specific commentaries or critiques related to items published in *Cryptozoology* should be sent double-spaced for publication in that journal.

To the Editor:

Concerning Marcellin Agnagna's field report on the Mokele-Mbembe (*Cryptozoology*, Volume 2), the turtles he observed with shells 2 meters in length (p. 107) are in and of themselves a remarkable find. Heretofore, the alligator snapper (*Macrochelys temminckii*) of the Mis-

issippi Basin at less than 1 meter in length was the largest freshwater turtle known.

I am of the opinion that if the next expedition to Lake Telle has as its only accomplishment the acquisition of one of these turtles, it would still rate as an unqualified success.

Michael J. Shields  
Long Beach, California, U.S.A.

See "Wood's Animal Facts," this issue.

-- Editor

To the Editor:

After reading in recent *Newsletters* about expeditions which reported sightings of both the Ri and Mokele-Mbembe, I am moved

to ask a rather impertinent question. Namely, what is it that makes professional zoologists assume that they are also professional photographers?

What I have seen in the reports are accounts of expeditions undertaken at great expense and effort which yielded valuable evidence, including visual observations, but which also painfully describe the loss of what could have been very substantial photographic data. In one case, a shot of Mokele-Mbembe was missed because the zoologist tried to shoot with the lens cap on, and with very little film left in the camera. In another case, only blurred shapes purporting to be the Ri were obtained.

It is in no way a damning criticism of a zoologist to suggest that his profession does



not include all the refined techniques of nature photography. If years of television specials can give the average reader details of lions' dentition as they nosh on zebra, or the intimate habits of puffins, etc., perhaps the techniques used to obtain such shots could be well used in the search for the never before seen. I rather feel that an experienced nature photographer, presented with the kind of evidence we now have, might fairly leap at the chance to be the first to film a live dinosaur.

I am well aware that even first-class photographic evidence may not serve to fully and officially establish the existence of the unusual kinds of creatures in question here, but to miss getting good photos after all the effort expended to make the sightings in the first place is enough to make the angels weep.

Thomas R. Williams  
Berkeley, California, U.S.A.

To the Editor:

As a professional photographer, I am amused at the amateur's dependence on all the automatic devices built into today's cameras. Fortunately for me, editors that pay good money realize that thought and experience are required in the making of consistently high-quality photos. However, I am disturbed when I read about well-financed cryptozoological expeditions searching for unknown animals, and there is no mention of a pro photographer participating. An eyewitness account by a scientist of an unknown animal does not compare to photographs or, even better, film in lending credibility to the animal's existence. I read things like "...the author unfortunately began filming with the lens cap on", "...the photographer (unnamed) had to 'shoot

from the hip'", or "...because of the low light conditions and the speed of the animal..."

Of course, even a pro will blow it occasionally, but the probabilities of he or she getting the shot are many times greater than an amateur. A pro reacts quickly to a photo opportunity. We are used to shooting from the hip, particularly those of us who cover sports, riots, and, of course, wildlife. The amateur faced with the sighting of the beastie stands in awe, and, if he is lucky, remembers his camera, and fumbles with the exposure, focus, and framing.

Bob Clay  
San Francisco, California, U.S.A.

The "lens cap incident" did not occur as reported in the Newsletter or in Cryptozoology, due to an ambiguity in the French/English translation (see interview with Agnagna elsewhere in this issue). It is true that Agnagna had the wrong setting on the camera, and he was practically out of film. The expedition, which was mounted by the Congolese government, did, in fact, include a professional television cameraman. As often happens in these cases, however, the animal appeared when least expected, and the observer (Agnagna) was 2 kilometers from the base camp, more film and the cameraman, who later refused to accompany Agnagna in a dugout canoe to where the animal had been seen. In the case of the Ri, the animal surfaced about every 10 minutes for 1-2 seconds. A professional photographer could not have done much better with that 1-2-second "window." The Mackal expedition to the Congo (1981) did include a professional photographer, but no animal was observed.

There is no doubt of the importance of including professional photographer/filmmakers on cryptozoological expeditions. Unfortunately, such expeditions

have not been "well-financed" at all, and many corners have had to be cut on personnel and equipment. Also, even highly professional photographers would often find it difficult to get good images. Most of the footage we see in television documentaries, which make it look like they were filmed in an afternoon outing, represent months of painstaking fieldwork; and that is usually in fairly accessible locations, such as the East African savannah, where animals are relatively easy to observe. Filming elusive animals in swamp-forest, where one often has to wade through mud and water holding one's equipment in the air (even narrow dugouts cannot get through) is a quite different situation. The photographer must contend with wetness and extremely high humidity, which affect the electronics within cameras, and continual attacks on uncovered lenses by thick, abusive vegetation. In addition, he or she must accept other trials, such as having to acquire food and drinking water, insect bites (up to 1,000 an hour in the Likouala swamps), and exhaustion. Heavy equipment, including cameras, can turn out to be more of a burden than an asset. If there are large unknown animals in certain remote locations, there are reasons for it--if they were easy to observe or photograph they would have been observed and photographed decades ago. Hopefully, future expeditions will be funded well enough to provide adequate equipment and expertise--but nothing can buy luck!

-- Editor

#### TABLES OF CONTENTS AVAILABLE

Members wishing to order back issues of the Newsletter and journal may first request free tables of contents listing the titles of all published articles. (Publications ordering instructions appear on page 6.)



## CRYPTOQUOTE

"I should like to state that we, the men of sail in days gone by, because of the quiet progress through the waters of our craft, were privileged to view sights not revealed to those who rode the seas on power-driven vessels. Scientists have often discounted our [sea serpent] reports as coming from superstitious and unqualified observers. But, to a degree, I protest. Who is more qualified than the man, be he fisherman or seaman, who makes his living from the great waters? Who is more qualified than the maritime officer who, by his very calling, is trained to judge size and distance, and who also possesses and uses various instruments to aid and record his observations? And who, too, by the very nature of his calling, is trained to be a skeptic?"

J. Ferrell Colton  
(From: Personal letter dated June 16, 1971, to Forrest G. Wood, U.S. Naval Ocean Systems Center, San Diego.)

*Note: J. Ferrell Colton is a mariner who has sailed to all parts of the world throughout this century. He is the author of Last of the Square-Rigged Ships (Putnam's, 1937), and many articles on marine history, oceanography, climatology, etc. His father, Harold S. Colton, was a marine biologist and one-time director of the Museum of Northern Arizona.*

## WOOD'S ANIMAL FACTS

"The largest living chelonian is the Pacific leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea schlegeli*) ... which ranges through the Pacific and Indian oceans from British Columbia to Chile and west to Japan and eastern Africa. The average adult measures 6-7 feet (1.8-2.1 meters) from the tip of the beak to the end of the tail (length of carapace 4-5 feet [1.2-1.5 meters]), about 7 feet (2.1 meters) across the front flip-

pers, and weighs anything up to 1,000 pounds (45 kilograms). The largest authentic weight recorded for a Pacific leatherback turtle is 1,908 pounds (865 kilograms) for a male captured alive in Monterey Bay, California, on 29 August, 1961... [It was] placed in a large tank, but the unfortunate creature succumbed afterwards from shock. This specimen measured 8 feet, 4 inches (2.54 meters) in total length... The largest freshwater turtle in the world is the alligator snapping turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*) of the southeastern United States. The normal upper weight limit... is about 200 pounds (91 kilograms), but there is an unconfirmed record of 403 pounds (183 kilograms) for a monster caught in the Neosho River in Cherokee County, Kansas, in 1937."

Abstracted from:

*The Guinness Book of Animal Facts and Feats*, by Gerald L. Wood. Guinness Superlatives, Ltd., Enfield, England, Third Edition, 1982.



### The ISC Newsletter

International Society of Cryptozoology  
P.O. Box 43070  
Tucson, Arizona 85733  
U.S.A.

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
TUCSON, ARIZONA  
PERMIT NO. 1786

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED  
FORWARDING AND RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED